

Infurcitinea ignicomella (Lepidoptera: Tineidae, Meessiinae), new to the Belgian fauna

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Abstract. On June 17th, 2012 a single specimen of *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852) was caught in a light trap at Kalmthout (prov. Antwerp, Belgium). This is the first record of this species for Belgium. Information on the geographical distribution and biology of the species is provided as well as a brief comparison with the three other Belgian representatives of the Meessiinae subfamily.

Samenvatting. *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Lepidoptera: Tineidae, Meessiinae), nieuwe soort voor de Belgische fauna
Op 17 juni 2012 werd een enkel exemplaar van *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852) met een lichtval gevangen te Kalmthout (prov. Antwerpen, België). Het is de eerste keer dat deze soort in België werd waargenomen. Informatie over de geografische verspreiding en de biologie wordt gegeven en de soort wordt vergeleken met de drie andere Meessiinae soorten die in België voorkomen.

Résumé. *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Lepidoptera: Tineidae, Meessiinae), espèce nouvelle pour la faune belge
Le 17 juin 2012 un seul exemplaire d'*Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852) fut capturé dans un piège lumineux à Kalmthout (prov. d'Anvers, Belgique). Il s'agit de la première mention de cette espèce en Belgique. Des informations concernant la distribution géographique et la biologie de l'espèce sont fournies, et l'espèce est comparée aux trois autres représentants belges de la sous-famille des Meessiinae.

Key words: *Infurcitinea ignicomella* – Faunistics – Lepidoptera – New record – Belgium.

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Introduction

On June 17th, 2012 a moth trapping night was organized at Kalmthout (prov. Antwerp, Belgium) as part of the moth inventory project of Grenspark De Zoom-Kalmthoutse Heide. Weather conditions were suboptimal for moth trapping since it was a relatively cold night with minima around 12°C, a mild breeze of 2–3 Bft. coming in from South/South-West. The sky remained cloudy but dry.



Figure 1. *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852) at Kalmthout (Antwerpen, België) 17.vi.2012 (Photo: Dan Sloommaekers).

A single, fresh specimen of *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852) (fig.1) was trapped in a Skinner-type moth trap using a 250W mercury vapour light bulb. The trap was positioned along the border between Scots Pine forest and a large, old dune patch where ample open sand remains but vast areas are covered by short heathland vegetation (Natuurpunt 2012).

Taxonomy

The Tineidae are a rather large, cosmopolitan family in which about 3000 species are described. Atypical for Lepidoptera larvae, they do not consume live plant material, but feed on detritus, fungi, lichen or keratine (Scoble 1992). *I. ignicomella* belongs to the Meessiinae subfamily, which is one of the larger fungus moth subfamilies. However, only three species of this subfamily are found in Belgium.

Eudarcia pagenstecherella (Hübner, 1822), a very rare species in Belgium of which the larva lives in a portable case and feeds on lichens or algae growing on rocks in shadow places. The adults fly in one generation a year and have been observed from late May through late July. *Stenoptinea cyaneimarmorella* (Millière, 1854) is a very rare and local species in Belgium. The larva lives on lichens on *Prunus*, or its rotten wood. The adults have been observed from late May through early September. Observations are mentioned in Antwerp, Brabant, Henegouwen and Namen.

The 76-species rich genus *Infurcitinea* was hitherto represented in Belgium only by *Infurcitinea argentimaculella* (Stainton, 1849) of which the only verified records are known from the provinces of Antwerp and Brabant and are dated before 1980 (De Prins & Steeman 2012). There are no known recent records of *I. argentimaculella* in Belgium.

Distribution

Throughout Europe observations of *I. ignicomella* have been recorded. This is the first record for the Belgian fauna, although the species is considered to be locally common in the Netherlands (Stichting Natuurinformatie 2012). In NL the species has

historically been noted on most of the inland sandy areas. The recent sightings (after 2000) are concentrated around heathland areas in the Provinces of Gelderland, Friesland and Drenthe. The nearest mention of the species in the Netherlands, in a heathland area near the city of Bergen-Op-Zoom in 1987 (Stichting Natuurinformatie 2012, Telmee 2012), is only 10–15 km away from the Belgian observation.

Characteristics

As most Tineidae, the species is small at only 8.0–11.0 mm and can be confused with members of the genera *Triaxomera* and *Nemapogon*. The forewing has an indistinct grey-brown ground colour, covered with scattered white scales. Faint spots can be seen on the costal and terminal sides of the forewings of fresh individuals (fig. 2). These lighter patches are poorly defined, are paler than the ground colour (Kuchlein 1993) and can be seen as a set of three bands that connect dorsal and costal side of the forewing. The head is more notable due to the dense cover of ochreous hairs on frons and vertex.

Biology

I. ignicomella is considered to rely on matter from animal origin, such as keratin, in its larval stage, as do some other members of the Tineidae family. The adults of the species fly from late May through early August.



Figure 2. *Infurcitinea ignicomella* (Zeller, 1852), mounted specimen (stichting Tinea).

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